

## DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

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SUBJECT: Department of Transportation Policy  
on Workers' Compensation

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The Federal Employees' Compensation Act establishes employees' entitlement to compensation for medical expenses and lost salary which result from job-related injuries and illnesses. Job-related traumatic injuries and occupational diseases have resulted in significant costs to the Department. However, there are a number of significant steps which operating administrations can take to reduce those costs. **IT IS THE POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION THAT OPERATING ADMINISTRATIONS SHALL TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THEIR WORKERS' COMPENSATION COSTS ARE AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL, AND THAT THEY ACTIVELY PURSUE THE MANAGEMENT OF CASES IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS.**

In administering their workers' compensation programs, operating administrations must consider the following elements:

- o Submitting Initial Claims and Other Forms. Initial claims forms and all subsequent forms required by the Department of Labor, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), must be completed by the employee and the appropriate agency managers within the time limits established by OWCP, and be filled out as completely and accurately as possible.
- o Controversion of Claims. Agency managers should controvert any claims which they believe are questionable, provided there is specific factual evidence to support that belief. Controversion must occur at the time the initial claim is sent to OWCP.
- o Medical Monitoring. Operating administrations are responsible for periodic follow-up with an injured employee's physician(s) in order to monitor the employee's medical condition, determine when the employee can return to work, and identify limitations on the type of duties that the employee can perform.


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- o Light Duty. Every effort should be made to consider a light duty assignment for an employee who cannot immediately return to his or her regular duties on a full-time basis.
- o Reemployment. Every effort should be made to reemploy injured employees receiving compensation for lost salary when medical evidence shows that total disability has ended. Operating administration management should also cooperate with the efforts of OWCP rehabilitation staff who are assisting injured employees in returning to employment.
- o Training. Operating administrations are responsible for ensuring that workers' compensation specialists and other administration employees assigned responsibility for handling workers' compensations cases receive the training they need to fulfill their responsibilities. Operating administrations should also undertake positive efforts to provide managers with the information and support they need to carry out their responsibilities when their employees are injured.
- o Resources. Operating administrations should allocate the resources necessary to ensure that workers' compensation cases are handled in an effective manner, and that program costs are minimized.

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to Denise Schossler, the Departmental Workers' Compensation Program Manager, on (202) 366-9447.

  
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Director of Personnel